You Don't Need to Ask

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You Don't Need to Ask

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Summary

Hannibal and Will and touching.

Or, these boys need a hug. From each other. That doesn't end with a stabbing.

Notes

All I need in season 4 is some sweet, sweet touching. Hugs, gentle kisses, fingertip touching. Give me all the Jane Austen shit.

See the end of the work for more notes

It's only been three weeks of their new life, after they arrived in this new house. If they had the luxury, Hannibal would have insisted that they remain in the cabin not far from the cliff for at least three more weeks, they still were not up to full strength.

And they weren't touching. Well, technically they were. But it was...well, to be honest, it was exactly what Hannibal had expected from Will. They were close, closer than ever, but they still struggled with coming to the exact terms of the relationship. Will slept in his bed every night, but as they both had a firm habit of sleeping on different sides of the bed, they never ended up close to each other. During the day, there would only be passing touches in handing over cups of coffee or helping prepare lunch. Will didn't like to initiate physical contact, Hannibal knew, and for once, he wasn't going to push him. They had gotten this far, Will was so close to him, there with him every day. Just those occasional small smiles and light touches would be enough, even if they weren't kissing and touching everywhere on the bed as the sun set behind the ocean, with snarls and sighs and the occasional begs and pleads for more, more, more.

Those were good nights, even if in the morning they wouldn't touch very much. It seemed as though they were comfortable transferring the desire-to-kill-you-slowly energy into kisses and warm touches, but they just couldn't behave like that all day. Days would be spent with pleasant conversation, that was good, but Hannibal for once found that he could not read what Will wanted. Sometimes Will would just read a book for hours before roughly pushing Hannibal down onto the bed.

Hannibal supposed that that may be the nature of their relationship forever, and he could be content with it. More than content, as long as he woke up and fell asleep with Will at his side.

But tonight, he had woken up to Will tossing and turning, making noises of distress in his sleep before abruptly sitting up in the bed, breathing hard. Hannibal could almost feel him shaking, even barely a few inches away. Will had dragged a hand down the side of his face and let out a weak breath. He looked so much like he did back when they were first acquainted.

Please don't lie to me, he had begged back then. Hannibal hadn't listened.

But now it felt...different.

"Will?" he asked quietly, not daring to reach out and touch him. "Are you alright?"

Will had only shrugged, not looking him in the eye. He had become better about eye contact lately, but now it was gone. He offered no response to Hannibal's question. Hannibal carefully maneuvered his way out of the sheets, dressed only in his pajama pants as he removed the robe off the hook on the bathroom door and offered it to Will. Will looked up, seemingly surprised.

"What - what are you doing?"

“If you’d like to go back to sleep, you may. But I would surmise that you do not.”

“No, I don’t,” Will murmured, putting the robe on and getting out of bed. “Where are we going?”

“Some food will help ground you, come,” Hannibal said, opening the bedroom door and Will got up and followed him downstairs to the kitchen. He sat at the breakfast bar and watched as Hannibal made a midnight snack of smoked salmon with cream cheese, some capers, and a dash of red onion on rye bread ends. They ate in respective silence, as thunder rolled in the distance. But Hannibal could never truly help himself.

“A nightmare?” he asked. Will took a sip of his water, and after a moment, he nodded. “What was it, if I may ask?”

Will paused, chewing his words along with his mouthful, and swallowed them both before finally saying, “You didn’t open your eyes when I asked you to, on the beach, after we fell.”

Hannibal didn’t press further. Will’s eyes were hard and he did not want to continue speaking, he just looks down into his glass of water, as though he was replaying the dream in his mind. Hannibal took the plates and placed them in the sink and turned it on to start washing them when he heard Will say in a clearer voice, “Hannibal?”

He turned around to see Will standing behind him, his expression completely unreadable. “Will?”

“Are you currently holding any knives or do you have any close to you?”

“...No,” Hannibal responded, not quite understanding what meant. Will let out a soft laugh, shaking his head.

*“I just - I **really** don’t want to get stabbed again right now.”*

Before Hannibal can inquire further, Will has closed the space between them and wrapped his arms around his neck, pressing his face there as well as he sighs in relief.

If Hannibal were a lesser man, he might have fainted.

He has often pictured how Will might kill him. Perhaps with a knife, perhaps his bare hands, and he had completely accepted the fate of falling off the cliff together.

But this is nowhere near what he had expected, and the air is currently leaking out of his lungs and he responds without much thought, wrapping his arms tightly around Will’s middle to keep him even closer, burying his face in Will’s dark curls.

*This - **this** is what was missing. He hadn’t even realized that he needed this. That they needed this.*

And they just...stay like this. For what feels like hours. Arms around each other, deep, inhaling breaths.

When they pull away, Will's eyes glittered in the streak of lighting outside the window. He takes his and very deliberately rests it on Hannibal's shoulder, rubbing his thumb across the bone there. "After all we've done to each other, and now that I'm here with you, you won't touch me without an invitation?"

"I was under the impression that you still needed time to adjust."

"You insufferable bastard," Will had laughed as he moved in closer and hugged him again. "You've never let anyone 'grant you permission' to do anything in your life. I don't intend for you to start now."

Hannibal chose to press a kiss at the nape of Will's neck before he said, "Permission for what?"

"If you want to touch me," Will said, slightly teasing but more reassuring, as they both become aware of the now-overflowing sink, "You don't need to ask."

"You're not listening to me, Hannibal. Rude, you know."

Hannibal is suddenly aware that, in fact, Will is correct. He has not been listening for quite some time to what Will had been saying. So he smiles, and squeezes the hand he is holding before saying, "I'm sorry, what were you saying?"

"I was asking where your mind was," Will grins, leaning back in his chair at their table on the café patio. He does not let go of Hannibal's hand.

"It is always with you," Hannibal replies, moving his own chair closer to the table so that he can reach across and rest his other hand on the top of Will's thigh, stroking his fingers across the lean muscle. *"That* I can promise."

Will only offers a heated look in response, making paying the check an immediate priority.

The sheer fact that Will allows Hannibal to touch him astounds him each and every day. It could be lightly tracing over the scar on Will's cheek, or on his forehead. It could be resting his hand on Will's shoulder in order to observe his actions. It would be the unadulterated pleasure of running a hand through his perfectly mussed curls for no apparent reason. Or holding hands in public settings, under tables or simply seated beside each other at events.

But perhaps it is these sorts of moments that Hannibal loves the most.

"No."

It is a petulant no, almost whiny in nature, and Hannibal cannot fight the smiles that crawls across his face as he tries to pry Will’s hand off of his own. The man in question seems to pout from his position wrapped in the sheets, and doesn’t let go of Hannibal's hand no matter what, even digging in his nails. “No, don’t get up.”

“I thought you requested a glass of water.”

Will concedes to that, and finally lets go of his hand. Hannibal returns shortly with the glass of water, which Will finishes before gesturing for Hannibal come back to bed, an order he is eager to comply with. As soon as he covers himself in the sheets again, Will turns over and leans his head on his chest.

“Do you mind?” he asks. If Hannibal had said no, he wouldn’t have listened. They both know this.

“Not at all,” is Hannibal’s smooth reply as he wraps his arm around Will, keeping him as close as possible as he kisses the top of Will's head. "You never need to ask to touch me, Will."

End Notes

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